



# Town of Groton, Connecticut

## Meeting Minutes

### Town Council Committee of the Whole

45 Fort Hill Road  
Groton, CT 06340-4394  
Town Clerk (860)441-6640  
Town Manager  
(860)441-6630

**Mayor Harry A. Watson, Councilors Heather Sherman Bond, Kathryn M. Brown-Tracy, Catherine Kolnaski, Deborah B. Monteiro, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Rita M. Schmidt, Paulann H. Sheets, and James L. Streeter**

**Tuesday, February 26, 2008**

**6:00 PM**

**Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1**

#### **SPECIAL MEETING**

#### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

*Mayor Watson called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.*

#### **2. ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Mayor Watson, Councilor Bond, Councilor Brown-Tracy, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor Monteiro, Councilor Schmidt, Councilor Sheets and Councilor Streeter  
Members Absent: Councilor O'Beirne, Jr.

*Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent and Executive Assistant Nicki Bresnayan.*

#### **3. Calendar and Communications**

*Town Manager Oefinger distributed a letter to S. Derek Phelps of the Connecticut Siting Council, rescinding the Council's previous communication.*

#### **4. Approval of Minutes**

##### **2008-0049 Approval of Minutes (Committee of the Whole)**

##### **RESOLUTION ACCEPTING COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council Committee of the Whole of February 12, 2008 are hereby accepted and approved.

**A motion was made by Councilor Bond, seconded by Councilor Monteiro, to adopt.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

#### **5. NEW BUSINESS**

##### **2003-0198 Public Water & Sewer on Flanders Road/Industrial area**

##### **Discussed**

*Councilor Bond thanked the Council for the opportunity to present the report. She explained the activities of the Flanders Road Utilities Extension Committee and its mission. Councilor Bond feels this is an important project to help offset the burden of residential property taxes. The project has been identified as a #1 priority in the Economic Strategic Plan, the CEDS plan, and the Governor's Diversification Plan for the Submarine Base. The Committee is comprised of a diverse group of people with many opinions, but they managed to reach a unanimous recommendation. The Committee reviewed 11 routes; six were identified as not feasible. The five remaining routes were studied in detail including cost benefit analyses.*

*Director of Planning and Development Mike Murphy introduced Virgil Boyd of Fuss & O'Neill, the consulting engineers for the project. Mr. Murphy distributed copies of a PowerPoint presentation presented by Mr. Boyd. The objective of the study was to evaluate alternative alignments and maximize the value to the Town. Mr. Boyd identified the targeted service area and provided an overview of the screening evaluation of the 11 potential sewer alignments. Five alternatives were short-listed. Mr. Boyd explained the detailed evaluation criteria applied to the five routes which resulted in a benefit to cost ratio for each alternate. Two preferred alternates (A*

and J) were judged to be almost equal. Due to the permitting requirements associated with Alternate J, the group then focused on Alternate A and developed two southern variations (public and private) of Alternate A.

Mr. Boyd then reviewed four potential water extension routes and costs provided by Groton Utilities. Total estimated cost for sewer and water extension is \$14,033,000. Mr. Boyd reviewed the costs broken down by segments.

Mr. Murphy updated the Council on the status of the permits for the private development mentioned by Mr. Boyd as possibly contributing to the costs of a segment of the sewer system.

Director of Public Works Gary Schneider noted the proposal is consistent with the Town's Sewer Facilities Plan.

Councilor Sheets asked how the proposal will achieve the benefits that the Town is hoping for. She asked if the Route 117 utility extension would be a good comparison or base line for analyzing the "payback" of the project. Mr. Boyd noted that the analysis compared benefits on a relative basis not specific to the grand list.

Councilor Bond stated the Committee is asking the Council to look at the report, and endorse the preferred route for further detailed study. She stated that infrastructure must be available for businesses and the Council should think of Groton's future and be proactive.

Councilor Streeter asked if the project would be done in phases and over what length of time. Councilor Bond stated that the Committee would recommend a single phase, although it could be broken into three segments.

Councilor Monteiro questioned if properties would be benefit assessed. Mr. Schneider noted that the Town Council would set the policy and he reviewed various approaches that have been used in the past. Councilor Monteiro asked what percentage of the acreage is zoned commercial/industrial versus residential and Mr. Murphy directed her attention to an appendix in the report. In response to a final question, Mr. Murphy noted that the land indicated under "private funding" has already been acquired by the developer of Mystic Woods who has agreed to grant any necessary easements for the sewer line extension.

Councilor Bond reiterated her request for a resolution accepting the report, endorsing the preferred route, and authorizing funding for further study. Mr. Murphy noted there is approximately \$40,000 in funds remaining. The estimated cost for further study would be \$100,000, which would be proposed in the Capital Improvement Program.

**A motion was made by Councilor Schmidt, seconded by Councilor Monteiro, to accept the report.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

*The Committee recessed at 7:07 p.m. for five minutes.*

**2007-0027**

**Burnett's Corners**

**Discussed**

Jim Mitchell of the Burnett's Corners Preservation Society and Bill Fosum were present to address the Council. Mr. Mitchell noted that he called neighbors who were supportive of not tearing down the old Mason's Hall at the corner of Cow Hill Road and Packer Road. He put together a plan for improving the exterior appearance of the building and reviewed the tasks for the Council. Mr. Mitchell stated that the funds are available and tools can be borrowed. He noted that he needs volunteers to contribute their time. Mr. Mitchell estimates that the work can be done by mid-summer 2008.

*The Town Manager noted that building permits would be necessary for some of the work. Councilor Streeter noted that white paint may not be a good idea as it may encourage vandalism. Councilor Streeter would like to see the building restored with a goal of completing it in seven years.*

*Town Manager Oefinger noted the reversion clause. He recommended a resolution acknowledging receipt of the proposal and noting an expectation that the work will be done by the fall of 2008.*

**A motion was made by Councilor Streeter, seconded by Councilor Bond, to acknowledge receipt of the plan for the old Mason's Hall at Burnett's Corners and to require that the work be completed by September 1, 2008.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2007-0274**

**Regulations for Parks and Recreation Facilities**

**Discussed**

*Director of Parks and Recreation John Silsby noted two policies that elicited discussion when the proposed regulations were originally presented: use of the Poquonnock Plains Park fields and the new policy regarding sponsorship signage which needed to be reviewed by the Town Attorney. The modified rules have been reviewed and approved by the Parks and Recreation Commission.*

*Mr. Silsby noted that signage for sponsors will remain up during the playing season. The signage is envisioned for Burrows Field, but it could potentially happen at Poquonnock Plains Park or any other parks. Councilor Monteiro asked if neighbors would be affected. Mr. Silsby noted that if signs are proposed that will impact neighbors, the Parks and Recreation Commission would take that into consideration before approving the signs. Council Monteiro asked that the Council be alerted if signage requests are received for Poquonnock Plains Park.*

**A motion was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Schmidt, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

**2007-0072**

**Citizen Committee on Property Tax Relief - Update**

**Discussed**

*Councilor Bond spoke with towns that have approved elderly tax relief programs. She does not want to give the impression that the Committee's work is being "thrown out". After doing some research, Councilor Bond discovered that tax credits actually amount to very little and it does not appear that they would help the people she is trying to help. She noted specific changes to the proposed program that she would like to see.*

*Councilor Sheets would like to appropriate a fixed amount in the FYE 2009 budget and figure out later what to do with it so that last year can be captured as the base from which to work.*

*Town Manager Oefinger stated that he is not sure of the mechanics for this type of program. It may not necessarily be a matter of budgeting a specific amount, but perhaps adjusting the anticipated percentage of taxes collected when setting the mill rate as is done for similar programs like the veterans exemption.*

*Councilor Bond reiterated her proposed changes to the Committee's recommendation and noted she would put it in writing.*

**2006-0282**

**School Improvement Project - Phase II**

**Discussed**

*Town Manager Oefinger explained that Councilor O'Beirne raised an issue regarding when the Town needs to go out to bid for the types of services that JCJ Architecture has been contracted for as part of the Phase II School Design Committee's efforts. Town Manager Oefinger reviewed*

*Councilor O'Beirne's inquiry, the Town Manager's response, and opinions issued by the Town Attorney.*

*Discussion followed on the hiring of JCJ and the services they will provide.*

**2008-0044 Bluff Point to Preston Bike Trail**

**Discussed**

*Mayor Watson reported on the meeting held on February 9th. He suggested the group look at reservoir systems that have permitted passive recreation. The consensus of the Committee was to place this item on the agenda for the joint meeting with the City.*

**2007-0310 FYE 2009 Budget**

**Discussed**

*The Committee reviewed the budget review calendar and there was consensus that there is no need for the Town Manager to do a budget overview on April 1st.*

**2008-0009 Legislative Policy (2008 Standing Referral)**

**Discussed**

*Staff and the Committee reviewed topics for discussion with legislators.*

**2008-0011 Joint Meeting with City of Groton (2008 Standing Referral)**

**Discussed**

*Topics for discussion at the joint meeting include Thames Street Rehabilitation, Pavement Management, Budget, and the Bluff Point to Preston Trail.*

**2008-0055 Department of Transportation Elderly and Disabled Transportation Grant**

**Discussed**

*Mr. Silsby briefly described the grant request.*

**A motion was made by Councilor Bond, seconded by Councilor Streeter, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

*A motion was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Bond, to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 p.m.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*